[Translation]

Uranium Oxide

33. *SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the PRIME* MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Scientists have developed any new indigenous technology for achieving self dependence in the production of Uranium Oxide fuel which is considered important for nuclear reactors;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantity of Uranium Oxide likely to be produced per month as a result of new technology?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) The technology for production of uranium oxide fuel for our nuclear power reactors was indigenously developed quite some time back. Based on this technology, the requirement of nuclear fuel of all our power reactors is being met by the Nuciear Fuel Complex, set up at Hyderabad in the early seventies. However, development of new technologies, which is an ongoing process, is pursued continuously.

(b) The "sol-gel" technology of making uranium oxide micro-spheres of uniform size and excellent flowability has been developed. Consolidation of these microspheres in the from of uranium oxide pellets, used as nuclear reactor fuel, has also been optimized. The feasibility of sintering this material at relatively low temperatures has been demonstrated. Fuel bundles using such pellets are currently under testing in power reactors for their performance evaluation.

As an alternative to the enriched uranium oxide fuel, used only for the two boiling water reactors at Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS), a new mixed oxide (MOX) fuel has been produced. This fuel is a mixture of plutonium and uranium oxides. A small number of fuel assemblies of MOX has been loaded in the reactors at TAPS.

(c) It is too early to quantify the production rates of nuclear fuel based on the new technology, in view of the status mentioned in reply to part (b) of the question.

[English]

Indian System of Medicine

34. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the present Indian system of medicine and health care needs the revival;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of several illnesses to which allopathy could not cure or prevent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) and (b) The Government have already set up a separate Department of Indian Systems of Medicine & Homoeopathy in March, 1995 for development and promotion of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani & Homoeopathy system of medicine and drugless therapies of Yoga & Naturopathy in the country.

(c) According to Indian Council of Medical Research, there are no drugs available for majority of viral diseases. Further in certain diseases, such as hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis, bronchial asthma etc. complete cure is not available for some of the patients in allopathy system of medicine, but the treatment can arrest the symptom and further progress of the diseases.

Honorarium to Part Time Midwives

35. SHRI CHANDRABHUSHAN SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Uttar Pradesh had requested the Union government to increase the honorarium payable to part time midwives from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 300/- per month; and

(b) if so, when was the said request received by the Union Government and the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The last request is dated 28 July, 1997. There is no Centrally approved scheme for engaging part time midwives.

In the existing Sub-centre scheme there is a provision for engaging voluntary worker for maintenance of the Sub-centre on honorarium of Rs. 50/- per month. The U.P. Government has requested for increasing the remuneration of "short-time mid-wives" which are not being funded by Govt. of India.

[Translation]

Pending Schemes of Maharashtra

36. DR. SAHEBRAO SUKRAM BAGUL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: